
Memorial
of
Miss Abby J. Day.

Regards of H. C. Hovey 5646
15.07



MISS ABBIE J. DAY.

ADDRESSES

AT GALVA, ILL.,

BY REV. C. W. CLARK, AND REV. R. B. GUILD..

Funeral Services and Memorial Sermon,

AT PEORIA, ILL.,

By Rev. HORACE C. HOVEY.

Sunday, October 29th, 1871.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE FAMILY.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, AT GALVA, ILL.,

BY REV. C. W. CLARK.

THE SWEET Psalmist of Israel has declared that, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light," and that, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul."

Our way here is not all bright, and how often we need the consolations which only the grand truths of religion can bring. Oftentimes we find ourselves cast down by the sorrows which spring upon us from every side, and filled with doubt by the contrary states of our own mind. We are at peace, and yet we are not at peace. We are resigned, and yet we are not resigned.

While the entrance of God's word brings life and immortality to light; while it opens up to our comprehension the glorious and wonderful realities of the eternal world; while it arouses our energies, and awakens us to the supreme importance of securing the crown of life; while it brings hope

and joy and peace to the believer's heart; yet the very light it scatters upon our pathway, the very glory which it reveals, has a tendency to break up the rest into which the believer has entered. Instead of completely satisfying the soul, the blessed Gospel has invested the eternal world with such circumstances of deepest interest, that what we have already received and known, only awakens a holy desire to know more, and enjoy all that a holy Heaven promises.

From the terms of the Gospel pledging a peace, which the world can neither give nor take away, promising a rest of quietness and assurance forever, we are led to expect that an unbroken calm will mark the walk of the child of God. And yet the paradox is ever present with the church, that the soul at rest in its peace with God, is yet never at rest. That while we are filled with the fullness and rejoicing in the hope of glory, yet we are never satisfied.

Such were the spiritual exercises and longings of her in whose burial service we now join with the bereaved family and friends. And knowing well the aspirations of her soul, her longings for complete likeness to the Lord Jesus, I have selected, as the theme for the few remarks which I shall offer, that portion of God's word which describes her experience, and sets forth the ground of our hope; that to-day, we bury the earthly remains of a dear child of God, whom the Father

has called to a higher and holier existence. That passage is found in the 17th Psalm, and 15th verse : " I shall be satisfied, when I awaken in Thy likeness."

And my first thought is, that *this is the language of a believer.* Eternal things are wonderfully clear and real to such a soul. His hope is not an ill-defined, misty notion, concerning which nothing definite can be affirmed. Such a soul believes in God, with a hearty assent to all his claims. He rejoices in the justice, holiness, and power of God, as well as in His mercy. He believes in the reality of the spiritual life and of the eternal world. He is persuaded, that :

" Beyond this vale of tears,
There is a life above,
Unmeasured by the flight of years ;
And all that life is love."

He believes in the resurrection from the dead ; that those who sleep in the Lord Jesus shall awaken to behold the glories of which they have received the promise ; that they shall not only enjoy the pleasures which are at God's right hand, but that they shall bear the likeness of their adorable Redeemer ; and whatever the trials of life may be, however great the spiritual dejection, however unworthy to himself he may appear, the hope which the Christian has received into his heart abides firm — the glorious comfort of his soul.

There are no doubts filling him with dismay ;

for he rests on the eternal faithfulness of God. Having fled to the refuge set before him, he has strong consolation in the promise and oath of Jehovah. And yet, the higher his faith and hope rise, and the clearer his views are of his heavenly home, the more his soul is at unrest.

Thus David speaks : “ I SHALL be satisfied. I am not satisfied now. Though Thou leadest me into green pastures and beside still waters; though Thou spreadest my table in the presence of my enemies, and my cup runneth over ; though Thou fillest me with the joys of Thy salvation ; yet what are these, O God, to what Thou hast reserved for those who tread the heavenly courts, and join in the anthems of celestial praise ?

Now in all these exercises the Psalmist is a type of every believer. Though we are the favorites of Heaven, with our sure hope anchored within the veil ; though our joys may abound, and every tear be dry ; yet because of this very hope, so full of life and immortality, so radiant with the glory of the eternal world, we long for the home in heaven.

“ We long to behold Him arrayed,
With glory and light from above ;
The King in His beauty displayed —
His beauty of holiest love.
We languish and sigh to be there,
Where Jesus hath fixed His abode ;
O when shall we meet in the air,
And fly to the mountain of God ? ”

In one sense we are satisfied. We are satisfied that the promises made to us in Jesus, our Lord,

will all be fulfilled. We believe that God hath exalted the crucified Jesus to be at His right hand, a Prince and a Savior forever, and we are persuaded of His ability to secure our salvation to the uttermost ; that His blood cleanseth us from all our sins ; that through His dear sacrifice upon the cross, we have obtained peace with God. And our souls rejoice in the assurance that all our sins are forgiven ; that we sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ; that we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus to the inheritance that is undefiled and that fadeth not away.

We know that “all things shall work together for our good,” and that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

And this knowledge gives a heavenly peace to the soul, to which the world is a stranger. God has given us such confidence in himself, that to us there is nothing so improbable as God’s failing to meet the expectations which He has raised.

There is doubtless in every believer’s experience, one moment when his soul is completely satisfied. It is the hour when his penitent soul embraces the promise of the Redeemer. When his burden of sin rolls away, the radiant Jesus is revealed in all the glory and power of His love, as *his* Redeemer ; the thunders of the law are hushed, and over his weary spirit steals the assurance of his everlasting salvation. How his soul

rejoices in God his Savior. How he exults in the mercy of God. Happy season, when he can call God his own—Christ his own—Heaven his own, and in the grand sweep of his faith and hope compass the bliss of eternity! What an ocean of delight and peace rolls in upon him as he exclaims, “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine!”

“Tongue can never express,
The sweet comfort and peace,
Of a soul in its earliest love.”

And in that happy hour it seemed impossible that his soul should ever again be overshadowed with trouble. God had set his feet in ways of righteousness. An open door was before him, and beyond was the bright crown, and the golden streets of the city of our God.

And, brethren, this was our experience. It was deepened and intensified, by our belief that, in washing away our sins, God was fitting us for the inheritance of the saints in light, and that by this glorious gift of his grace, there was a new and wonderful relationship to the righteousness and holiness of Heaven.

But when from the bliss of that moment we awoke to the realities of the Christian’s life here on earth, and stepped forth into the arena of the Christian’s conflict, and found ourselves still in the body of flesh, we found it a garment of corruption. We thought we should live a holy life, but the passions and storms and trials of life, have often-

times left us mourning. Our highest aspirations and our holiest endeavors, have been paralyzed by the in-dwelling power of sin. And the every-day lesson of our lives teaches us that our present holiness is of a very imperfect character. It is when we feel our short-comings, and realize how different we are now from what we shall be upon seeing the King in His beauty, that we long for the hour to come when we shall stand before God. Then shall the world's weight be lifted off from our heaven-bound spirits! Then, every string being cut which binds us to earth, we shall soar away to our God, and the groanings of time shall be exchanged for the sanctified songs of eternity. "I shall be satisfied when I awaken in thy likeness."

I have chosen these words because, to my own mind, they express the most clearly the aspirations of our sister whom we bury to-day. My acquaintance with her commenced last winter, soon after my settlement here.

She was then spending the holidays at home, and at her own request I had two sweet and precious interviews with her. She seemed to feel that the great love which Christ had manifested for her, demanded something more from her than she had ever given. She had no doubt of her conversion; that was a blessed reality. Her hope was strong, but she hungered and thirsted after righteousness. She felt that she did love Jesus, but she was also sure that there were heights of Chris-

tian experience to which she had not yet attained. Especially was this the case, with reference to the perfect rest of faith. The cares of life, the ambitions of her chosen calling as a teacher, and the pleasures of the world, sometimes came in like a flood, and distracted her attention from the one great purpose of her soul. At such times her faith was not so clear, nor her hope so bright, as she desired. She longed for full and complete fellowship with God, and to walk in the light as he was in the light. It was the strong desire of her soul, to so put on Christ that all the world might see that she was a Christian.

One of her inquiries was this: "How can I have the conscious presence of Christ with me at all times?" She spoke of her own imperfect following of the Master, and how it grieved her that she was so little prepared for the glories which awaited her in the abodes of his holiness.

And you will recall, brethren, her earnest testimony, in one of our prayer meetings, but a few weeks before she was called home. It was brief, but it was the utterance of her soul, "I want to be an unconditional Christian." And it was not because she felt that her race was nearly run; but the overpowering loveliness of her Redeemer had beamed upon her soul, and for Christ's sake she wanted to make her life a useful and noble one.

The gentleness of her heart, and the purity of her spirit, led her to look with longing eyes to

her heavenly home. From an interview with her after she had given up her school and returned to her father's house, I learned how fixed was her hope, and with what anticipation she looked forward to her heavenly home, and was reminded of the pilgrim's song :

"It is a weary way, and I am faint;
I pant for purer air and fresher springs;
O, Father, take me home; there is a taint,
A shadow, on earth's purest, brightest things;
This world is but a wilderness to me;
There is no rest, my God, no peace apart from Thee.

My dear friends, you are here to-day, mourning the early departure of the gentle and loving daughter and sister. And while your flowing tears and sorrowing hearts are some faint index of the great love with which she was enshrined, yet you can not mourn as those who are without hope. She has left behind her no uncertain testimony, and though we bury the casket in which the soul was enshrined, she has gone home to be with her God. Here you are weeping, but in Heaven we believe she is singing. Here, your souls, in the presence of this great affliction, sit dumb, but she is rejoicing before the throne of God and the Lamb. She has done with sorrow; she has done with sin; she has done with fear. She has joined the great army of prophets, apostles, and spirits of just men made perfect.

And with this glad hope in your hearts, look up! She has but gone before you to the blessed

and perfect rest. Thither is the Savior calling you. Soon your race will be run, and she whom, in the gloom of your hearts, you bury out of your sight to-day, will stand by the side of her Lord, to welcome you to the joys of His eternal kingdom.

ADDRESS BY REV. R. B. GUILD.

At the conclusion of Mr. Clark's address, he called upon the pastor of the Congregational Church to speak a few words. Mr. Guild spoke substantially as follows:

"When the good are taken from the earth there is a loss, not only to the immediate circle in which they moved, not only to the friends who knew them best and loved them most, but to the community in which they lived, to society generally, and to the world. We often wonder why the lovely and the talented, who are capable of exerting so wide an influence, of doing so much good, of helping on every good cause, are taken away in the midst of their usefulness, when the world has so much need of them.

"We believe in an all-wise Providence; in a God

without whose notice not even a sparrow falls to the ground. How can we reconcile such events with His goodness and mercy? It may be that we cannot reconcile them. The mystery of Divine Providence is often impenetrable. But there is one thought which I love to bring home to those who have been bereft. It is this: God makes no mistakes. He is wise, He is good, and nothing is beyond His control. For the good of His creatures He has placed them under laws, and the events of His Providence are in accordance with those laws. When one sickens and dies, we can often trace out the causes of disease and death; but still God is in His laws. Seeming evil He overrules. He makes ‘all things to work together for good to those who love Him.’ Now this is the thought for the child of God to entertain in the hour of trial: *My Father has done it, and He cannot err.* Trust in God—that is the only balm for the sorrows of earth. There, in the bosom of Infinite Love, must the troubled, sorrowing soul find peace.

“A nobleman entrusted a beautiful garden to a faithful servant. In it were many flowers, rare and lovely. The servant took great pride in his garden, and cultivated and cherished his flowers, as his dearest treasures. He enriched the soil, supported the plants upon frames and trellises, and carefully kept out the weeds; nothing was omitted that could add to their perfection and

beauty. But one morning on entering his garden, he discovered that his rarest flowers were gone. As he hurried from one variety to another, he found that the choicest of each had been plucked from the stem and taken away. Full of sorrow and indignation, he hastened to the other servants to inquire who had done this thing. At length there was one who said, ‘I saw the master walking in the garden this morning, and it was he who plucked the flowers, that they might adorn his palace.’ Then the gardener was satisfied; his indignation and sorrow were gone. The *master* wanted the flowers for his palace, and he had a right to them, for they were his.

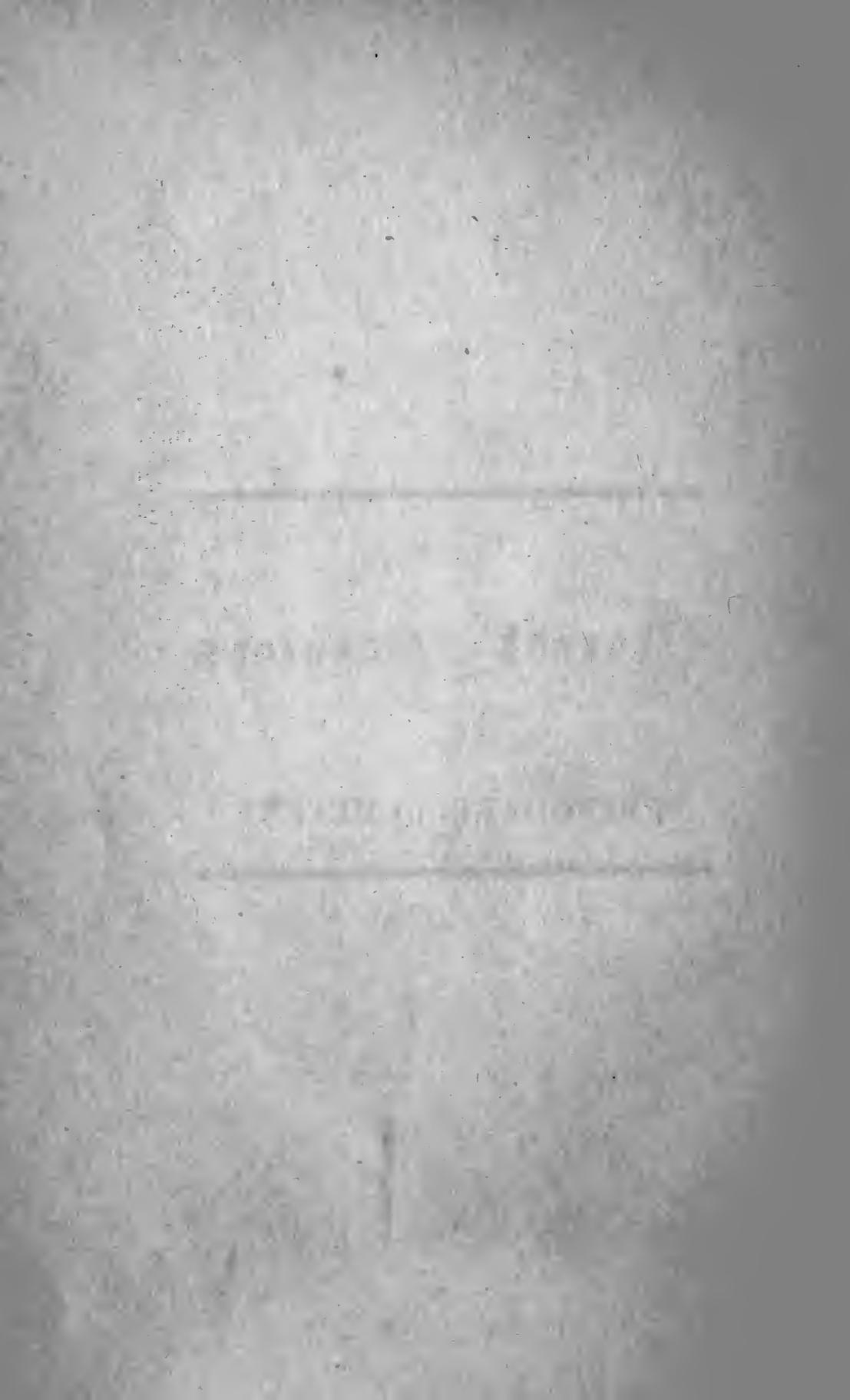
“*We* shall be satisfied when we can feel from the heart that our master, God, has taken our treasures to adorn His temple above.

“There is another thought to which I would call your attention. We wonder that the good are taken away in the blossoming of their promise and usefulness. Let us remember that, ‘Except a kernel of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it beareth much fruit.’ It may be that we find one application of this law in the case before us. I remember that a little less than two years ago, we were called to stand by the open grave of one, cut down suddenly in her beauty and loveliness. Then, as now, the bereaved asked, ‘Why is this?’ But there was an eloquence in those cold and motionless lips. God

spoke through them to the living. ‘ Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.’ There were solemn pledges then made, and we trust that, in the mercy of God, some became His dear children through the instrumentality of that lesson.

“ To-day, in the presence of God, are assembled many of the young who have come to mingle their tears at the funeral of their acquaintance and friend. Oh ! will you not to-day, in this sacred presence, as you stand by the bier of her whom you so much loved and respected, make that choice which we are assured she had made. Make her God your God, her Redeemer your Redeemer ; that whenever the summons shall come which shall call you from earth, you may enter into that eternal rest upon which she has entered.”

When the services at Galva were concluded, a procession of mourners escorted the remains to the special train of cars by which they were taken to Peoria for interment.



THE

 Burial Services 

AT

SPRINGDALE CEMETERY.

H Y M N .

The following hymn was sung by a quartette of friends :

THY WILL BE DONE.

Jesus, while our hearts are bleeding,
O'er the spoils that death hath won,
We would at this solemn meeting,
Calmly say, Thy will be done.

Though cast down we're not forsaken,
Though afflicted, not alone,
Thou didst give and Thou hast taken,
Blessed Lord — Thy will be done.

Though to-day we're filled with mourning,
Mercy still is on the throne ;
With Thy smiles of love returning,
We can sing — Thy will be done.

By Thy hands the boon was given,
Thou hast taken but Thine own ;
Lord of earth, and God of Heaven,
Evermore — Thy will be done.

ADDRESS BY REV. HORACE C. HOVEY.

How HARD it is to say, what has just been so sweetly sung, "Thy will be done!" We have come to the most trying scene of this eventful day. We must bury our dead. How it makes our hearts ache! Of all this great company, standing amid these rugged oaks, and beneath this sunny sky, there is not one whose cold heart refuses the tribute of sympathy Fain would we speak words of comfort; but your affliction has such unfathomable depths, that in attempting offices of consolation, we must seem to you almost like those friends of ancient Job, to whom he said: "Miserable comforters are ye all!" Yet, amid the fullness of your grief, there most certainly are marked providential favors, of which I am happy to speak to these bereaved ones.

To lay the idol of your hearts in the silent grave seems to be simply terrible! But look away, for a moment, from this hollow receptacle for the dead. Look around upon these wooded hills, that have so lately surrendered the gay tints of

Autumn for a mantle of russet and brown. Look across the tangled ravines, and let your weary eyes rest upon the mirror surface of yonder silvery lake. Look above, and admire the cloudless canopy of blue that overarches this glorious landscape. And thus surveying the handiwork of God, can you question the supreme goodness of your Heavenly Father? It seems as if, for your sakes, the Lord had chosen one of the fairest Summer Sabbaths, and lent it to grace this season of general decay.

Among the chief mourners to-day is one whose sorrow is the more poignant because, had our departed sister been spared, she would have been his bride. He desires that you should know this. It is no longer a cherished secret. All was ready, and even the marriage license had been procured; and it is with him now, although swift relentless death has stepped between the loving pair that were to be wed. Singular strength from above is imparted to my young friend, to bear this sudden blow, by which his brightest hopes are so cruelly dashed to the ground. I could not refrain from speaking to him of this, as the funeral train, with its emblematic badges of mourning, sped along over the prairie from Galva to Peoria. "It is pitiful," said I, "to see so dark a cloud spread itself over so young a life as yours, shutting out from sight the blue heavens and the shining sun!" He spoke in reply, with much Christian resignation,

and manly fortitude, of the sources of comfort still remaining. He said that the gentle spirit flown did not appear to be very far away. "It may seem strange," he added, "but I feel that, although no ceremony had been performed, she was my wife, and that I now have a bride in Heaven. This is my wedding-day!" His tranquil spirit seemed by the grace of God to be brought into harmony with this exquisitely beautiful Sabbath, which so realizes the picture by Herbert's flowery pen:

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky."

But, my afflicted friends, the stern hand of necessity is upon us, and we must withdraw our gaze from sky, and lake, and rustling grove, and look down into this dark tomb. There lies the coffined dead; now covered with crosses and wreaths of snowy blossoms, but soon, alas, to be concealed by clods of clay. And there it must be left to moulder back to dust. Would that I could say something to dissipate the gloom of this dismal hour! I know not how this may better be done than by recalling a scene from that beautiful life now closed upon earth. Our departed sister had one of those pure and happy souls, that gather, like the bee, honey from every flower. So she would glean most spiritual and heavenly food, even from the fields of fiction and romance. Thus it was, at the very last interview she enjoyed with

a beloved uncle, in company with whom she was reading one of the masterpieces of England's greatest novelist. At the close of the passage I am about to quote, she burst into tears, and clasped her dear uncle's arm, saying, "How beautiful and good! How it robs death of all its terrors!"

It was represented, as well as I can remember, that Florence Dombey's mother had died clasping her little daughter to her breast. The scattered ringlets of the child lay motionless over the pale face of the sleeper. Alas, how little breath there was to stir them! Thus clinging fast to that slight spar within her arms, the mother drifted out upon the dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world.

The sorrowing child was not permitted to witness the funeral of the deceased lady; but, when the sad ceremony was over, it fell to the lot of a kind-hearted nurse to explain the facts. Little Florence looked earnestly in her face, and said, "What have they done with my mamma?" After a few innocent attempts at evasion, the nurse said to the motherless child, "Come and sit down by me, and I'll tell you a story. Once upon a time there was a lady—a very good lady, and her little daughter dearly loved her. Who, when God thought it right that it should be so, was taken ill and died."

The child shuddered.

"Died, never to be seen again by any one on earth, and was buried in the ground where the trees grow."

"The cold ground?" said the child, shuddering again.

"No! The warm ground," returned the nurse, "where the ugly little seeds turn into beautiful flowers, and into grass and corn, and I don't know what all besides. Where good people turn into bright angels, and fly away to Heaven. So when this lady died, wherever they took her; or wherever they put her, she went to God; and she prayed to Him to teach her little daughter to be sure of that in her heart; and to know that she was happy there and loved her still; and to hope and try — oh, all her life — to meet her there one day, never, never, never to part any more!"

Oh, my friends! That is your Abbie! Let the thought which so touched her sensitive soul, as expressed for the comfort of a disconsolate orphan, bring balm to your own bruised hearts. We lay our loved one, not in the cold, cold ground, but in the *warm ground*, whence she shall arise a glorified form. And for this belief we have higher authority than any dream of romance, being the very word of God himself:

Saith the patriarch Job, when bereft of all things, and sorely afflicted: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my

skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God!" Fifteen hundred years passed away, that blessed hope meanwhile cheering devout and believing souls. And then, in an upper room at Jerusalem, the night of His betrayal, that Redeemer himself, in comforting His afflicted disciples, said: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." And, finally, remember the words of an inspired apostle: "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.—So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,

Death is swallowed up in victory!"

H Y M N .

When the summer flowers were dying,
And the autumn leaves were flying,
Came a whisper sadly sighing,

Gone from earth, forever gone!
How our broken band have missed her,
Since in parting last we kissed her,
Gentle maiden, loving sister!

Abbie, dear, to Heaven has flown.

While we deck, with fairest flowers,
Abbie's grave through summer hours,
She through fairer fields than ours,

Walks the crystal river by.

Abbie went to dwell with Jesus:
Now He calls us, now He sees us;
By His love from sin He frees us;

We shall meet at last on high.

Soft white snows come down to cover
Abbie's couch of slumber over!
Spring's mild hand shall spread above her

Dew as soft and flowers more fair.

Jesus, fold Thine arms around her;
Gentle angel bands surround her,
Keep her till our love hath found her,
When we go to meet her there!

THE SUDDEN SUMMONS.

A Sermon.

By Rev. HORACE C. HOVEY,

Pastor of the Fulton Street Presbyterian Church,

IN PEORIA, ILL.

Sunday Evening, Oct. 29th, 1871.



THE SUDDEN SUMMONS.

The hand of a mysterious Providence has led our thoughts to-day into but one channel. It is fitting that we should still converse of death, on the evening of a Sabbath, which by many of us has been spent from sunrise to sunset in the company of mourners. Our departed sister was not a member of this church, though some of her kindred have their vows registered here, and her numerous friends are to be found in all the congregations in this city, for

“None knew her but to love her,
Nor named her but to praise.”

By choice and conviction she belonged to the Baptist church, to which also belong many of her surviving relatives. Amid circumstances different from such as now exist, (that is, if our sister-church at this time enjoyed the services of a settled pastor), the delicate and solemn duty might appropriately devolve upon another, of speaking those words which I am invited to address, by way of

comfort, to a heart-broken family, and of timely admonition to this community.

The phase of this affliction to which I shall deem it best to turn your minds is the extreme swiftness of the unlooked-for stroke. Death came in this instance from what seemed to be a very slight cause. One little nerve was irritated. Inflammation was thus transferred from the eye to the brain. Medical skill was baffled, and with scarcely a single note of warning, the fair maiden was called away into the silent land.

My thoughts revert to those words of impressive solemnity with which David addressed his bosom friend, Jonathan, at a moment of imminent peril.

I. Samuel, 20:3. "*Truly, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.*"

The shepherd-lad, the son of Jesse, had early learned the lesson of life's brevity and uncertainty. So often had he been in danger from the teeth of the lion and the paw of the bear, from the sword of Goliath and the javelin of Saul, that he felt like one treading on the verge of a precipice, down whose rocky sides he might, by a single careless step, be hurled at any moment.

Ought we not, my friends, in this hour of trial to be likewise impressed with the nearness of death ; and because between it and us there is but a step, ought we not to be better and holier persons ?

Yes! But a step! This, I suppose, we might say at any time with truth. And it may not be amiss to dwell awhile on this general view of our frail estate, before considering the more especial reasons that press the unwelcome truth upon our minds on this occasion.

Life, at best, is but short; and it is only a step from the cradle to the grave, in the case of the most aged persons. When the patriarch Jacob, at the great age of one hundred and thirty years, was asked by an Egyptian King "How old art thou?" he answered that the days of the years of his pilgrimage had been "few and evil." To the young alone does life seem long. To those who look back from the confines of eternity, life must always seem to be but a span. The strong swimmer, who has struggled through the ocean waves for a league, appears, to those safely on shore, to have measured a broad expanse. But he—looking off with weary eye across the countless billows before him—seems to himself to have scarcely measured his own length amid the waters. So, to the aged, the longest life seems to be but the first few hurried strokes, amid the surf and the breakers, that bring one to the full survey of limitless duration.

It was only yesterday, that I was reading the words of one who for more than half a century has labored to win souls for heaven. He says, "In early years eternity appeared to be distant and of

small importance. But at the period of life to which I have now attained, it seems to me as if the earth had left the orbit of its annual movements, and was making a direct and rapid flight toward the sun! The objects of eternity toward which I am moving, rapidly enlarge themselves. They have become overwhelmingly bright and grand."

Our present life is but the vestibule of eternity. And, though the decorated collonades and lofty arches of this outer porch may be very beautiful, yet when we have passed nearly through, and have reached a point where the glories of the great temple come into view, we see that this life is but a step compared with that vast immortality to which it introduces us. And remembering, too, that from this probationary state, there is also a door leading down to darkness and long despair, we see that although life is but a step, it is of untold importance in what direction that step is taken; whether toward the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens—or toward the abyss, where there are sighs that always sigh, and tears that ever weep,

"And ever fall, but not in mercy's sight."

An existence thus freighted with momentous interests should be wisely and watchfully passed. Whether long or short, it is the period in which is decided the destiny of the never-dying soul.

"Wherefore," says the apostle Paul, "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." "For all

flesh is grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away." How finely are these inspired words imitated by the Bard of Avon, who says:

"This is the state of man : to-day he puts forth
 The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
 And bears his blushing honors thick upon him ;
 The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
 And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
 His greatness is a ripening, nips his root,
 And then he falls ! "

Affecting picture of the longest and most prosperous life !

But it is probable that David, when he penned our text, was not thinking so much of the universal brevity of life, as of the nearness of death to himself personally. A powerful king had decreed his destruction. A great army was to march against him, while his own sources of aid were few and insufficient. Truly, there was, as he said, but a step between him and death. It was not the Lord's will, however, that the fatal step should then be taken. He brought his faithful servant safely through surrounding perils. He prolonged his days until the strong, ruddy youth had been transformed into a hoary-headed patriarch; and then, in a ripe old age, when his work was fully done, "he" called him home, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

How many times in our own history has death

knocked at the door—and then passed on! Few persons arrive at maturity without experiencing many hair-breadth escapes. We are constrained to recall them, to-day, as we reflect on the sudden death of one, in the full bloom of womanly grace, whom the swift-winged messenger has called away with scarcely a moment's warning. Let memory do her appropriate work in bringing up some of these by-gone scenes of peril. Have you forgotten that terrible shock when, amid the thunder storm, you saw the fierce lightning strike alarmingly near? Have you forgotten the time when, amid boyish sports, the treacherous ice gave way, and you narrowly escaped a watery grave? Have you forgotten the memorable times when the glancing axe, the falling tree, the random shot, the careless leap, or the frightened steed, brought you within a step of death? Have you forgotten those weary days of sickness, when friends stepped softly about what they thought to be your dying bed?

And then again there have been times when you were nigh unto the grave and knew it not. Crossing the broken bridge, sailing in the unsafe vessel, walking beneath the loose-hanging rock, fighting the raging flames, breathing an atmosphere tainted by pestilence—in such ways, varied a thousand times, you have brushed past the grim King of Terrors and gone safely on; and some of you, perhaps, have ungratefully pushed away the hand of Almighty Love that warded off the fatal disaster!

In these days when the power of steam is invoked to whirl us along with the speed of the wind, we meet with many a narrow escape that we hardly think of a second time. In order to realize this, take your position by the railroad track, on any of our principal lines of travel, and observe the next express-train that passes by. In the far distance a white cloud is seen; it slowly increases; the silence of the prairie is broken by a low rumbling sound; the rumble soon changes to a roar; the iron giant is in full view; now he rushes by with his great burden of precious life; he is heated and furious; he shakes the earth with his tread; he stuns the ear by his voice of thunder; he frightens you by his lightning speed. The train passes on; it rapidly recedes; it diminishes in the distance; it is gone; all is silent again, and you are left alone to reflect on the wonder that has thus passed by. The highway over which it sped is an embankment that might be easily washed away by a freshet. The iron rails are secured by slender spikes; and are here and there splintered and bruised. The only thing that keeps those swiftly-revolving wheels from flying the track, is a thin flange, liable to fracture. A limb falling in the forest, a stone rolling down the hillside, a defect in one of the rails, the crystallization of a wheel, the misplacement of a switch, or any one of a thousand different causes, may in the twinkling of an eye, send into the other world every soul on

board. It is quite true that human ingenuity has thrown many safe-guards about modern modes of travel, and that needless alarm is foolish. But considering the unavoidable dangers, which can neither be averted nor foreseen by the sagacity of man, would it not be well for us, when we next take our seats in the comfortably cushioned car, and before we take up the morning paper, or engage in conversation, or compose ourselves for a nap, to remember that there is but a step between us and death, and that we may have bought tickets for our last journey? The fact is that railroads were not built solely for commerce and pleasure. We have, this very day, under the pressure of necessity, used them for the most sacred duties of humanity. And I could not help thinking, as we hastened along on our errand of sympathy and love, and as I have lately on other occasions, seen long trains loaded with food and raiment for those made homeless by the great conflagration at Chicago, that it was time for the world to know that this broad network of railways and telegraphs spread over the land, was built for God, and that as Christianity advances He will use these agencies yet more and more to carry on purposes of mercy and to develop His own vast designs. Remember, then, that in Him, the chief proprietor, is to be the Christian traveler's trust. His mighty hand superintends the skillful engineer, the careful track-master and the laborious work-

man, and under His guidance you speed along safely on your dangerous way.

These instances are but a few of the countless causes of mortality constantly at work ; now slaying one on our right hand, then glancing by us, to strike down another on our left. In the words of that exquisite hymn that was sung to-day :

“ There is a reaper, whose name is Death,
And with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that glow between.”

The sad-browed angel, Azrael, never pauses in his flight among the habitations of the children of men. It has been estimated that every time the clock ticks, or the heart beats, an immortal spirit breaks through the thin partition dividing time from eternity. On this, our own day of mourning for a dear friend, more than eighty-six thousand, have likewise died. It does not become us, then, to be selfish in our sorrow. The mourner’s tears are never dry. The dying groan is somewhere to be heard every instant. It is said that since those of us who are now in middle age were born, one thousand millions of our fellow-beings have descended to the tomb. How swiftly passes the vast procession of the children of clay down again into the dust from whence they sprang ! Oh, what a world is this, where so many millions more lie beneath the sod than walk above. Where the

empire of death is so much more populous than the kingdom of life !

My words are spoken to eye-witnesses of these ravages. Have not we seen the bright eye dimmed, never to sparkle again? the ruddy cheek blanched, never again to glow? the little child, the fair maiden, the strong man bowed down in death, never to rise again—never, till He who is stronger than the grave shall come in his glory and break the icy fetters of the dead! Most of us have repeatedly been called to mourn the loss of dear friends; and the trial has been so sore that we have felt as if it would be a mercy could we too lie down in the tomb by their side.

Seldom does the decease of a friend occasion more sorrow than is felt to-day. An amiable, gifted, beautiful young lady, whom everybody admired, and whom her relations regarded with peculiar tenderness, is suddenly cut down on the threshold of a useful and joyous life. Abbie was one of eight brothers and sisters,—the first child taken away from parents whose happy wedded life has spanned thirty-three years. She stood in a circle of thirty cousins, whose relations with each other were so intimate that they seemed to belong to but one family. The merry band is broken now, and its choicest gem is torn from its golden setting. A wide range of friends is also impoverished by this great loss. It is felt by the church to which our departed sister belonged, and by other churches which were just

learning to prize her for her personal worth, and for the value of her services to the christian community. The classmates, with whom in former days she pursued her studies, and the pupils whom it has more recently been her privilege to guide in the paths of knowledge, commingle their tears over her grave. We all vie with each other in expressions of sympathy for the bereaved parents and kindred, and especially for *him* whose cause for grief is so peculiarly touching, from whose very arms death has snatched a bride away! Weep on, ye broken-hearted, for Nature bids your tears to flow, and there is peril in the grief that knows no tears. Weep on, for the shortest, and sweetest, verse in the Bible tells us "Jesus wept." Weep on, for it is the blessed office of tears "to wash the eyes of faith" so that we can see the heavenly land. Let the anguish of your hearts be poured forth in floods, for yours is no common cause for sorrow.

There is a difference in the effect upon us of the trials to which we are subjected. The news is flashed to us over the trembling wires that a magnificent city, the pride of the West, is laid in ashes; the conflagration sweeps over many hundreds of acres, destroys thousands of buildings, millions of treasures, and worst of all many human lives. But the loss is so enormous that it cannot be grasped. We are dreadfully shocked, but the very magnitude of the stunning blow tends to work its own cure. It is such sharp and sudden strokes, as are felt to-day,

that pierce the soul with many sorrows. We picture to ourselves that chamber of sickness—the fair patient pronounced out of danger—a sense of quiet security pervading those who had before been anxious—the family all asleep—the maiden herself asleep—one loving watcher alone awake—when, all at once, the dread messenger comes and the seal of death is set upon the pale brow. Every sleeper, but one, is awakened by the alarm that is given; and she exchanges soon the sleep of calm repose for that deeper sleep that knows no waking till the resurrection morn. Not even a last farewell was spoken! Lifeless lips have no response to make to loving words.

Yet a voice speaks to us from out the bosom of this profound sorrow. Hard, indeed, must be our hearts, and insensible to heavenly impressions, if, while performing the last offices for these inanimate remains, we hear not the solemn summons, "Prepare to meet thy God!" Oh, my friends, we stand on the brink of unseen worlds, and soon there will not be even a step between us and death, but we shall be clasped in his cold embrace. For us, in turn, the mourners will go about the streets. Ah, my hearer, you and I have taken many steps up and down this beautiful, though sin-stained earth, amid its flowers and its thorns, its sorrows and its joys; many steps have we taken, but finally we shall take our last step. We shall for the last time press foot upon the green-sward; and then our

friends, or possibly a stranger's hand, will lay us beneath the turf, to decay and molder back to dust. Amid the busiest and gayest hours, we cannot be wholly free from these dark forebodings. We are all going down the hill; and, as we go, we hear these warnings, like distant bells upon the breeze, tolling our knell. I have sometimes sat pensively on the grassy bank of the purling stream, whose waters still flow laughingly on as they did in my childhood, and I have said to my soul—thus they will laugh and flow and sparkle in the sunshine when thou art gone forever! And when I arose from my grassy couch, and saw the print I had made by crushing its tender blades with my weight, I have said to my body—this much alone, of all the great globe, is thy heritage!

But come, ye sorrowful ones, let us not sorrow as those that have no hope! We have been betrayed into conversing upon death, too much like Sadducees and atheists. As it has been beautifully said, by one who knew the truth of his words, "We bury a Christian to-day." We should not give death too strong an impersonation. There is in reality no King of Terrors. Death is but an event brought about by the great Disposer of events. It is neither the work of some malign spirit, nor is it attributable to blind chance. Those are also wide of the mark who explain the event by what they call the laws of nature, meaning thereby something distinct from the modes of

divine action. Death is God's work just as really as was the original act of creation. "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest return ye children of men." God causes the rock to fall, the wind to blow, the lightning to flash—and man dies. He sends forth the pestilence, the famine, the flood—and man dies. His hand loosens the avalanche, opens the volcanoes, kindles the forest fires—and frail man dies. And so, my friends, the same Lord whom you love and worship, permitted, for reasons of his own, that sensitive network of nerves to be thrilled with pain, until tortured nature refused longer to sustain the burden of life, and the dear object of your hearts' devotion expired.

May our Heavenly Father enable you to say with unaffected sincerity, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Death is a necessary part of God's dealings with us. Nothing is more evident than the fact that the sum of human misery would be immensely increased, did not death mercifully intervene, as a divorce between the suffering soul and the injured bodily frame. Probation, too, from the nature of the case must have a limit; and we ought not to forget that, for the righteous, probation ended is a blissful eternity begun. The strong hand of Christian faith may thus gather comfort amid the gates of death, even as Samson found honey between the ribs of the slain lion.

There is, in the sure promises of God, consola-

tion that may drop like balm upon these aching hearts. While you are weeping as though your eyelids would never be dry, she for whom your tear-drops fall, is, as we hope, a saint in Paradise. Her sweet voice now is heard in the angelic choir. Oh, how she loved the service of song when on earth! It had power to soothe her spirit when all else failed. I am told that last Wednesday, when her brain was on fire with that agony which finally resulted in death, she would quietly lie and listen as long as her sisters sang the beautiful songs of Zion. There she reposed, at peace with Jesus, while from day-dawn till midnight those heavenly melodies held in abeyance her mortal agony. And now that the pain and anguish are forever at an end, would you, if you had the power, climb the sapphire walls of Heaven, accost that sainted spirit as she walks in robes of white, bid her cease to sing the angels' hymn, lay down her harp of gold, and come back to earth again to mingle with a sinful race? Ah, no!

" Give the lone grave the body,
Give to the earth its own;
For the lofty spirit which it shrined,
Back to its source has flown!"

Our sister is at rest in the bosom of her God. As the startled dove, when its swift flight is ended, nestles securely near the heart of its mistress, so by resistless attraction the freed spirit has ere this found its way to the Savior. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Let your downcast souls, then, be cheered by the triumphs of immortality and the hope of the resurrection! The maiden is not dead, but sleepeth! She shall arise again in fadeless beauty, a glorified form. Your own eyes shall behold her. With a flash of instant recognition, and a burst of mutual rapture, the sweet friendship of earth shall be forever renewed. And in that fair land of the future there is neither sorrow nor pain, old age nor decay. Its inhabitants are ever fresh and young, though countless centuries may roll away, bearing them onward in a vast eternity of bliss.

But while we await the coming of the Lord, we have many present sources of comfort, which should not be undervalued. There is no little pleasure to be had in beautifying the last resting-place to which the precious clay is consigned. Many times you will visit that enchanted ground, though for some of your number it may require a long pilgrimage. The sacred spot will be marked by the sculptured marble. The Summer's sun will kiss the mound of brown earth, and it will put on its bright robe of grass and flowers. Evergreens and roses will be planted among the gray old oaks on the hillside, whose thousand leaves whisper by day to the wavelets on the blue lake, and by night to the solemn stars in the blue sky. And even when the wintry winds whistle, and the bare branches stand in sharp relief against a frosty sky, that quiet city of the dead has oftentimes a strange

beauty of its own. Thus it was when first I visited Springdale in company with some of these now afflicted friends. The withered leaves had been swept from the trees, and the violets and daisies were submerged in a sea of snow, above which the cold marble monuments arose, marking graves that seemed like successive billows. Over-head the frost-king had woven his crystalline arbors. Every twig was a spray of diamonds. The icicles glittered in the light of Christmas morning. The very realm of death was transformed into fairy land.

But, my friends, it is a mistake to suppose that our sainted dear ones will seem nearer to us by the grave than by the fireside at home. The body lies in yonder cemetery, it is true, but the spiritual aroma and fragrance of treasured memories will chiefly be found elsewhere. Chiselled stones and rows of cypress, grass-grown graves and wreaths of flowers, are powerless compared with seemingly trivial mementoes of the dead. Some jewel or other article of personal adornment, or even some faded ribbon or cast-off garment, may bring the dear one suddenly to mind with startling clearness. And in the case of your sainted Abbie, whose tastes were so intellectual and refined, you will probably find her nearest to your souls as you look on the works of art that pleased her most, and sing the songs she used to sing, and read her favorite books. An instance of this has occurred, very

pleasing to my own mind, since we laid her remains in the grave. Memory brought vividly before me a group of youth reading selections from the poets. One, whose mellow tones were peculiarly adapted to convey the most delicate shades of thought, was reading Tennyson's Song to the Sea. She read on, till she came to the last stanza, when her voice, which had grown softer by degrees, was mute, and her hazel eyes swam with tears; she could not finish the poem. Those of you who knew her well, can easily imagine how she strove to chase away her tears by smiles. As the verses must now have a kind of halo about them for you, those to whom they may have become very familiar by frequent repetition, will indulge me in quoting them once more, especially as they are so full of tender pathos:

“Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, Oh Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

Oh, well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
Oh, well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill,
But, oh for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, oh sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.”

By-gone days are forever past, but the bright future is before us in which, by the mercy of our Savior, we may hope to clasp again the vanished hand, and to hear once more the voice now hushed in death. Great sorrows are designed to teach great lessons. It is perhaps the grandest display of Christian grace when we are enabled to transform our trials into stepping-stones toward the Better Land. Faith's anchor holds best amid the rudest storms. This bitter cup is doubtless mingled for a merciful purpose. Drink it as from your Father's hand. Our duty is to let God have His way; and it is our blessed privilege to cast our burden on the Lord: thus all shall be well.

It is Jesus who has taken your darling to His bosom, and if you, too, by faith are there, you will be where your loved one is. I counsel you, therefore, not only to lean upon Jesus, but to throw your whole weight upon Him, and to let Him carry you in His arms, for He is the Good Shepherd.





